

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Barko Hydraulics

Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center

Barko Hydraulics Goes With The Flow

Client Profile:

Barko Hydraulics, LLC designs and manufactures a complete line of log loading and harvesting equipment used mainly in the forest and refuge business. Located in Superior, Wisconsin, the company employs less than 50 people.

Situation:

Barko Hydraulics recently experienced a significant decline in profits and sales, and Barko management realized that survival would have to come from outside help. Mike Burgess, president of Barko Hydraulics, consulted with the Superior Planning Commission, which recommended he contact the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance. Mr. Burgess worked with NWMOC in the early 90's and, recognizing the level of expertise the Center would bring to the table, asked NWMOC for assistance in implementing flow manufacturing.

Solution:

NWMOC staff members met with representatives from Barko Hydraulics and decided to help implement flow manufacturing on the company's loader machine assembly line. After NWMOC trained all Barko Hydraulics' employees in the basics of flow manufacturing, it put together a value stream map to help identify production processes that needed corrective attention.

NWMOC helped Barko employees implement a single piece flow on the loader assembly line, beginning by placing parts at the point-of-use and proceeding to reorganize the plant's layout. With a new layout in place, NWMOC implemented a pull/kanban system for inventory control. Implementing flow manufacturing and a pull/kanban inventory process at Barko Hydraulics resulted in improved worker productivity, reduced lead times, and improved quality with lower costs.

Results:

Reduced lead time on assembly line by 50 percent.

Dramatically reduced stock outs.

Increased product line sales by five percent.

Significantly reduced assembly labor time.

Improved product quality.

Testimonial:

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"The Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center gave us a lot of resources and really got the people educated; there wasn't a single person here that didn't get trained. In the first month of implementation, using the process NWMOC taught us, our production rate was higher than any month from the previous year--and we haven't looked back since."

Mike Burgess, President